POINTS

1. Loss of superstar SB (has his page).

2. Whole Earth vs. Marin

3. Negativism of young generation: see it, its gone tomorrow.

4. Cannibalized into the mainstream

5. Independent living wasn't so independent, more co-dependent. Tension of wanting classic success.

6. So many tools and so little change. Or, so much influence (enviro groups) but still losing. (see "3"). Tools as pardigms. Where is the webbing?

7. Personal empowerment vs. collective empowerment. Sad-eyed nerd at the computer screen. Corporate and church collectivity attractive. If too indidivudal, then what?

The success of Whole Earth was also its collapse. When Whole Earth started, it was at a time of dropouts, antiquated course curricula and war, the dawning hope that racism might really fade, new found psychedelics, oblivious corporations, up-tight churches, unimaginative and dull spiritual and ethical dialog, low cost land in the countryside, and a tiredness with the bleak 1950s product lines. Personal empowerment, independent living, new visions, floating free of the "system" were the carrots of hope.

By the 1980s, Whole Earth had become as mainstream. Its original photo of Earth from space appears everywhere. The catalog was cannibalized with each limb going commercial: Utne reader high-graded the "alternative culture;" Real Goods did a spectacular job selling "appropriate technology;" the Beltway enviros (Audubon, Nature Conservancy, E magazine) gnawed off the environmental issues and advertised them; bioregional enivro magazines like High Country News floursihed; a gillion health and nutrition magazines took off; Outside and Patagonia financed huge staffs just to cover and sell the outdoors; our editor Kevin Kelly ran off with the computer euphoria and launched WIRED ....it goes on and on....and at the source lay Whole Earth Catalog and the Coevolution Quarterly. We could not be better praised and honored by this success. The question arises: Do we need Whole Earth any longer? Has it nurtured, thrived and now gone obsolete? Does the Internet and the massive profusion of other magazines mean that the catalog's vision has won the stage and its time to take a final bow? Has the context so changed that our vision has turned glaucomic.

The old Whole Earth said "We are as gods and might as well get good at it." But, this dream of divine humankind has been tempered by a quarter-century of history. Most gods fought and killed and raped and punished arbitrarily -- is that what we meant? We are also as mammals and might try getting good at that. We are also forever fallible humans and might as well get comfortable and a bit more light-hearted with our endless illusions. As a society, we are far from mental grace -- skilled in accepting single-mothers and children, divorces, sacred spaces, the balance between money and inner peace,

The disharmonies are more complex. When is a fertilized ovum to be considered a "human" or a soulful human? When have we lived long enough? Who has responsibility of the continuation or ending of life? Or, when does jet-setting in the name of helping the earth or corporations or refugees in Africa become flagrantly hypocritical? Global teenager and meaningful work and service? At what point on the food chain should we eat? At what point does job security or the fear of career stagnation become deathly? When we are told to take the long-view and not get overwhelmed by the petty, little squabbles, how long is long? how big is big enough?

The false dichotomies have become shrill and brittle. Business vs. Evironment. Academic training vs. Apprenticeship. Transnational vs. Gaian. Inner life vs. Outer Living. Spiritualism vs. Materialism. Science vs. Religion. Sacred space vs. Property Rights. Technology vs. Voluntary Simplicity. Computer Hip vs. Dumb Everyone Else. Feminism vs. Family.

The need for "skillful means" has never been more pressing. The ethics in governance and business has rarely received more cycnicsm. The desire for a few reasonable rules that can be accepted and discussed rather than endless power-brokered deals is coming to a crisis.

Now, the pure products of America appear to have gone mad and global and bionic and biotechnic and computational. Those who smile or wink at this techno-product euphoria are attacked as luddites; those who remember de-comsumerism, buy new hardware and computers every year.

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When the old Whole Earth promoted "access of tools," tools felt like solar plates and composting privies and access to taboo'd equipment like clitoral stimulators, even new fangled hot tubs and techno-duds like geodesic domes. There was a belief in "Whole Systems" that now looks fragemented.

The tools needed most importantly include new paradigms, new vocabularies and organizational skills from the rainforest Nambikara to the CEOs of Shell. The paradigm must include uncertainties and shocking, unexpected events that no one could predict. The ideals of sustainability or restorative economics or act locally/think globally do not feel muscular enough, they are still embryonic, fragile. We know that we must act and think locally and globally and regionally and even stratospherically and surely microbially.

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What is the right price?

The question then is can the Whole Earth be whole Earth? Will our readers tolerate such a view? Can we become a signifcant forum of a new citizen or civil society of decentralized grassroots groups that acts as the balance to those who try out their economics on the less industrialized nations is not the place to test your latest computational scenario and then rationalize the resulting poverty as "temporary adjustments." The need is obvious. When in Cameroon, I watched the rice crop moulder because Thailand could get rice to Cameroonian people at half the price. On Dzil nchaa si an (a sacred mountain to the San Carlos Apache in Arizona), I watched an international consortium of astronomers (Italian, the Vatican and German) overwhelm a nation still (one hundred years after defeat) try to comprehend this global desecration of their holy land for Big Science. In the United States, we all watched the spotted owl take the blame for halting the cutting of old growth, when the cheap dollar and the expensive yen and shippers were the more important driving force.

independent living
free floaters
home bizness
Whole Earth has rarely been against anything (if we did not like a book, we simply did not review it). Although blistering critiques of "classical" economics and transnationals abound, I do not favor purely destructive analyses. Herman Kahn was a great addition to the debates with Wendell Berry.

At first, the only remaining claim to uniqueness I could think of was: we have no ads. But, so what? Most readers we surveyed didn't mind ads that conformed with our outlook. Gary Snyder said we were still the best place to find unknown books of interest. We believe its true. But, *relieving* our readers of the time and energy to find interesting books is not equivalent to

the old times -- *enabling* our readers to partake in the future with fun and hope, a serious intellect, and heartful compassion.
Now, the pure products of America appear to have gone mad and global and bionic and biotechnic and computational. Those who smile or wink at this techno-product euphoria are attacked as luddites; those who remember the de-comsumerism, buy new hardware and computers every year.